

133 sheet of water from the melting snows. Lake Viedma lies some miles to the southward from the head of the valley, and I should be inclined to think that the course of the Rio Chico, which undoubtedly flows from it, would be found to come from the south to north, and bend easterly at the head of the valley, where it unites the numerous streams as described by Viedma in his journey in 1580. I am also inclined to think that Viedma being taken twice across the Rio Chico mistook the river at the second crossing for another, which he has marked as the Chalia, a name, by the way, unknown to the Indians, save as applied to an unsavoury parasite only too common among them. The following morning, September 2, we were sitting quietly round the fire discussing a breakfast of boiled ostrich prepared by the lady of the house, when suddenly the clash of knives was heard, and we saw two Indians, destitute of mantles, with naked swords in their hands, run across from Camillo's to Crime's toldo. In a minute everything was in an uproar; arms were produced, guns and revolvers loaded, and some of the Indians equipped themselves in coats of mail, and others, with the assistance of the women, padded themselves about the chest and upper part of the body with thick blankets and corconillas or saddle-cloths. Knowing what was about to happen, the women, and with them all the Chilian deserters, except one, beat a retreat to a safe distance from the toldos. Having assumed my arms, and feeling thoroughly mystified as to the real cause of this excitement, I went to Camillo's toldo, where the scene explained itself. He was lying on his bed dead, with a frightful gash in his side, having been murdered by Cuastro, one of the Indian whom we had seen running to Crime's tents. On issuing from the toldo Casimiro met me, and asked for a revolver, as he had no firearms, and I lent him one accordingly. The Indians showed by their changed countenance all the fury of fight; their very complexions seemed ghastly, and their eyes glared and rolled, seeming to see blood. The two opposing parties.

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512 party, interchange of visits and card parties with the recent arrivals, fishing, foraging for birds' eggs, spinach, &c., with some flirting, and, by way of business, a parlamento or two, made our time pass merrily enough at Henno.

588 Our hunting parties were under the direction of 'the oldest inhabitant,' an aged cacique called Gnenalto, with venerable white hair, and who had been crippled by a lance-thrust, received to his honour be it said, while endeavouring to mediate between two of his friends. His great age and amiable character commanded universal respect; and on a hunting morning he would sit under a bush and speechify

[537] for half an hour, recounting old deeds of prowess, and exhorting us to do our best. The old man was a frequent and welcome visitor at our toldo, where he was encouraged to indulge to his heart's content in long-winded stories. My 755 compass greatly excited his curiosity, and he took it into his head that it possessed a magical power which could effect the restoration of the use of his arm. He accordingly begged to be allowed to hold it in his hand; and sat patiently, with an air of awe and faith combined, for an hour, afterwards declaring that the operation had done him much good. We

● 714 greatly pleased him by repairing his coat of mail, a complete tunic of heavy iron chains, of unknown antiquity, bound together by strips of hide, and weighing over a hundred-weight. This he informed me he only put on to defend himself from 'foolish Indians.'

777 His use of my compass was rivalled by the custom of other friends, who were wont to borrow it when engaged in a game of cards; their belief being that the magic instrument gave luck to the happy possessor for the time being; and I often thought that it was fortunate I had brought no other instrument, as 'shooting the sun' would have been certainly regarded as a piece of sorcery, and any death or accident happening afterwards would have been visited on the head of the magician. As it was, my taking notes was

203 often regarded with suspicious curiosity, and inquiries made

It is improbable that these parts contain metals, because if there were metal here the Indians would have found it and put it to use; and they would naturally have come upon it at one time or another as they are never in one place very long, changing from one site to another in order to subsist on the game which, according to season, moves inland or comes down to the beaches. 135

The weapons which they use are the bolas and the lasso, and also 411 knives and sabers which they acquire from the Pampas Indians of Buenos Aires or [79] else make themselves from any piece of iron given them [437] and which they regard highly for this reason. They also sometimes find 325 iron on the beaches, the remains of wrecked ships. It requires a great deal of effort on their part to make one of these weapons because, even though they heat the iron by fire, as they have no tools they can only avail themselves of stones to beat it into shape then they must grind it by hand and trim it on the rocks and give it a sharp edge and a point.

In their battles they fight on foot, leaving the women in charge 726 of the horses. They put on garments similar to men's shirts, with tight [714] sleeves, made out of ten or twelve well-worked deer hides which no knife or saber can penetrate. They put a sort of hat or helmet upon their heads made of horse or bullock hide, shielded with which they attempt to slash the enemies' legs and cut through their boots, they being more vulnerable there. They are very resolute and persevering in battle and do not abandon the field once upon it until they are either overpowered or killed. They also use the bolas, and every person who is overcome is usually killed because they become so zealous and cruel in battle that they will not give up. This is why this region is not more thickly popu- [164] lated, for the women are very fecund and few diseases bother them. 842

From Santa Elena to the Rio Negro the Indians say that the land 133 is parched and waterless and only in the rainy season can a few small lakes be found. When these are dry they are obliged, when they wish 487 to go to the Rio Negro, to travel inland towards the mountains where there are springs. As they have to travel uphill far to the west to do this the distance is three times greater when they wish to come down to the Spanish settlement, compared to the coastal road, if this latter had water.

The tents are pitched by sticking two poles about two or three 342 yards long into the ground, about four and a half feet from each other; beside each pole and at an equal distance from it, they thrust two shorter poles into the ground. To the west of these six they place six shorter ones at an equal distance, and to the west of these at the same distance, six others a little more than three feet long. Upon these eighteen poles they place the hide with the hair outward, and secure it to the upper end of all of the poles. From each pole they hang, on the inside, as it were curtains of hide which form the necessary divisions. These curtains are tied to the